31: Slater S-5 (1916-1917) 1918 AWI India
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000 to free them from debt. Co-operation is worth trying. The Agricultural Loans Act might be made more accessible. The tenants need more protection in their holdings. *The burden of taxation must be lightened* and more equally distributed, so that the incidence of taxation may not be so heavy on the poorest class; the villagers are starving themselves to pay the taxes.* Any appearance of an improvement in the standard of living of the villagers is deceptive, being only on the surface and confined to the better classes. The condition of the Cherumas and other agricultural labourers is badly in need of improvement. The fundamental evil is poverty and debt.

The industrial position of the village must be strengthened. The existing industries (i.e., crafts) are languishing. To an able and enthusiastic industrialist there are further possibilities of profitable employment of capital and labour.

Garden cultivation can be extended, the cultivation of valuable commercial products like pepper, coconuts, etc., might be carried on on a larger scale on capitalistic lines. Plantain fibres, it is said, can be utilized for the manufacture of a kind of silk-like cloth, much in demand by certain classes, for certain purposes.

Bamboos abound and may be used in the manufacture of paper.

The cultivation of gingelly seed on dry lands might profitably be extended and the product crushed in the village oil machines worked by oxen. There seems to be scope for considerable development in this line. It is a question whether groundnuts and indigo cannot be introduced and cultivated in the village. The Agricultural Department might usefully depute one of its staff to make a tour of the district and examine the possibilities of extending and improving cultivation—of introducing new crops and an improved and more varied rotation of crops. *The quality and extension of village education is a serious and pressing problem.* The present system of elementary education is doing as much harm as good. Its first fruits are seen (in this village) in the unwillingness of the 'educated' boys to return to their old occupation; all sorts of vain notions and sentiments get into their heads and they are [738] learning bad habits. It is certain that the 'educated' village boy has a supreme contempt for his uneducated parents and others and puts on airs of superiority and refuses to work in the field. Some of the boys are becoming regular scamps, good-for-nothing, and up to all sorts of mischief. Education of this sort is the last thing in the world to destroy the estrangement between the literary or intellectual tendencies of the higher classes and the practical labour of everyday life and industry. In actual fact the vices of the existing state of things tend to be perpetuated. It is high time to find a remedy.

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151 * [The taxes referred to are the very small quit-rents charged as land revenue, averaging less than Rs. 5 per acre for wet land which mostly yields two crops per annum, less than Rs. 2 per acre for garden land and less than Re. 1 per acre for dry land. Mr. Sundara Aiyar explains that the janmi shifts the burden of paying the land revenue on the kanomdar, and makes this stipulation in writing; the kanomdar in turn shifts it on to the working tenant, who is a tenant-at-will. Including the kist the working tenant pays 50 to 60 per cent of the gross produce to the kanomdar, the kanomdar pays to the janmi about one-quarter of what he receives in addition to the kist.—Ed.]